

Screening introduction and improvement of Finger millet (*Eleusine coracana* (L) Gaertn) Varieties as a hope for sustainable food Security in Nigeria

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Finger millet is an important security crop but it is not popular in Nigeria. This is due to many reasons. Although it is one of the most nutritious among all the major cereals and also a major staple food for millions of people, the crop has received less attention in Nigeria. The few farmers that accepted the crop in the country identified some problems associated with the production of finger millet viz: striga problem, difficulties in differentiating between weeds and finger millet at early stage of growth, high labour requirement as a result of the use of broadcast method of planting, to crown it all the problem of blast which could be as a result of the current global warming is a big problem. Blast was reported to have reduced between 10 to 80 % yield. The other serious problem reported by farmers that adopt finger millet as one of their crops is the fact that they have no access to improved varieties or cultivars. It is therefore important to make the farmers aware first of the crop and its importance and then source for improved cultivars. It is also important to develop complete agronomic interventions for finger millet with an aim to reduce the labor requirement and drudgery faced by farmers. Improvement of agronomic practices in finger millet is a must for encouraging farmers for continued cultivation. In Kaduna State farmers inter crop it with ginger. Therefore researchers need to look at the cropping system approach rather than on one single crop. Furthermore, development of proper value chains, regulated markets, establishment of production cooperatives, and various value addition initiatives should receive support so that demand can drive the cultivation. Thus the reason for screening varieties suitable for cultivation in Wukari in Nigeria.